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Economic History and Geography

Democracy after the War. By J. A. HOBSON. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 1917. Pp. 215. 4s. 6d.)

It is becoming a common saying that in these days of world travail a social order that has been reared through generations of leisurely evolution is rapidly disintegrating under the irresistible pressure of competitive warfare. The old order not only changes; it disappears. While these are undoubtedly over-statements, it requires no virile imagination to appreciate that the war has wrought changes in our economic and social organization which are of profound significance. As throwing light upon this problem of a new industrial and social order, this volume on *Democracy After The War*, by one of the most versatile as well as most liberal of modern economists, has made an unusually timely appearance. With rare insight into the workings of social forces, Hobson portrays the nature of the struggle that must come after the war before real democracy can be achieved.

The book is divided into two parts: (1) The Enemies of Democracy and (2) The Defense of Democracy. Part I has the following chapter headings: Militarism and the Will to Power; Militarism and Capitalism; The Defense of Impropropriety; Protectionism and Imperialism; Political and Intellectual Reactionists; and Spiritual and Social Reactionists. Part II, the following: How to Break the Vicious Circle; The New Economic Situation; Two Problems for Labor; The Conquest of the State; The Close State versus Internationalism.

In brief, the author argues that the forces of reaction will be more closely consolidated at the end of the war than ever before, and more conscious of their community interest. They will have at their disposal a large number of new legal instruments of coercion and the habits of obeying them derived from several years of use. All the educative and suggestive institutions, such as the church, schools, the press, and places of amusement, will be poisoned with false patriotism and class domination which masquerades as national unity. On the other hand, he sees that the war has generated a powerful fund of genuine democratic feeling. He feels that the contrast between the liberties for which people were fighting and the new restraints for peace will be at once disconcerting and instructive. He sees that economic and financial struggle will everywhere break up the artificial national unity of war time. He urges that the grave political cleavages that will

develop around the issues of reconstruction will set free large volumes of political energy for new political and economic experiments. Further, many of the old customs and sanctions so powerful in England will be broken down. "The raw material and energy for a great democratic movement will be at hand, provided that thought, organization, and direction can make them effective" (p. 212).

Hobson sees a "vicious circle" of recreation confronting democracy at the end of the war consisting of: the militarist bureaucracy who are now in control of affairs, church, school, and press, conservative landlords, capitalism, legalism, militarism, protectionism, and imperialism. To break this "vicious circle" he insists that no single panacea will suffice. The "apparently unrelated reactionary forces" are so unified that it is necessary to develop a coördination in the forces of democracy:

If we can show the keen land reformer that he cannot in fact gain his object except by throwing his energies into the broad movement to recover and enlarge the liberties of the people; if we can make the educationalist, the temperance man, the "social purist," the hygienist, the franchise leaguer and the other specialists recognize that they also can only make progress to their desired goal by perceiving and feeling its organic unity with the general cause of democracy, we shall for the first time begin to realize that hitherto baffling hope which has deluded several generations of democrats, the power of numbers. . . . If the experiences of this war have not revealed . . . the necessity of expelling from all specialist progressive movements those elements which are unable to take the wider outlook and to respond to the larger intellectual appeal, we can only conclude that our people are incapable and therefore unworthy of democracy. . . . Our hope lies in the conviction that the fierce light of war and its glowing aftermath will show men that, unless an ordered popular will can flood all the main channels of national life, intelligently controlling all the major organs of government and influence, State, economic system, church, press, schools and universities, and the creative and relief adjuncts, there is and can be no security for anything that ordinary men and women value in life (pp. 158-161).

To accomplish their ends it will be necessary, in the author's view, for democracy to make a conquest of the state. He sees in the disposition of some labor elements "to give the go-by to the state, as a capitalist instrument, and to fall back upon new plans of coöperation, trade-unionism, syndicalism or guild Socialism" a dangerous fantasy.

While Hobson is a staunch believer in political and industrial democracy he underestimates neither the difficulties of its attain-

ment nor the tremendous problems involved in its successful administration. For instance, he warns the English proletariat that any effort to limit productivity can spell only disaster. This does not necessarily involve any painful or injurious intensification of toil; it may be accomplished by improved organization of labor and of industrial management generally. In no other way can the masses hope for a permanently improved standard of living. Statistics are presented which show that the pre-war income of England if equally distributed would not suffice to give the average family "the full requirements of a civilized modern life" (p. 173). Hobson argues that owing to the great destruction of capital during the war the national income after the war will be lower than ever.

In the reviewer's opinion *Democracy After The War* may be compared not unfavorably with Veblen's *The Nature of Peace*. It shows quite as keen an insight into human nature and social processes; and it is broader in its scope, containing much more in the way of constructive suggestion. The book deserves the widest reading in this country from the standpoint of its cultural value as well as its application to the problems of economic and social reconstruction which now confront the American democracy.

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Economic and Social History of Chowan County, North Carolina, 1880-1915. By W. SCOTT BOYCE. Columbia University Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, Vol. LXXVI, No. 1; Whole No. 179. (New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 1917. Pp. 293. \$2.50.)

Chowan County was one of the original precincts of the Lords Proprietors, but was settled prior to the granting of the charter of 1663. Its county seat and only town is Edenton, one of the oldest communities in North Carolina, and one which has contributed a body of men of eminence in state and nation out of all proportion to its population. For more than a century it was not only the center of the political and intellectual life of that section of North Carolina, but was also its most important town, having only in later years been distanced by Elizabeth City. Since 1800 the county has had a negro majority and its whole history has been greatly influenced thereby. The chief occupation is and has always been agriculture. Fishing comes next with lum-